

ATTACHMENT A



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THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR 2009

REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS AND TRAINING GRANTS – METHOD II, TRAINING AND OVERSIGHT GRANTS

States are required to use this solicitation to apply for the Administrative Reviews and Training Grants - Method II: Training and Oversight Grants.

APPLICATION DUE DATE: MARCH 19, 2009

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Application/Template
Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Instructions
Form SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs with Instructions
Form SF-424B, Assurances - Non Construction Programs with Instructions
Certification/Disclosure Requirements Related to Lobbying with Instructions

**NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)
FY 2009 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND TRAINING GRANTS REQUEST
FOR APPLICATION (RFA)
TRAINING AND OVERSIGHT GRANTS
CONCEPT PAPER DEVELOPMENT**

INTRODUCTION

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265) amended Section 22 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), to establish a requirement that State agencies (SAs) conduct additional administrative reviews of selected school food authorities (SFAs). It also amended Section 7 of the Child Nutrition Act to provide funding for States to be used for administrative reviews and training of SFAs. Both of these requirements are focused on SFAs which have demonstrated a high level of, or a high risk for, administrative error.

To assist SAs in achieving these requirements, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has approximately \$16 million available in fiscal year (FY) 2009 to fund Administrative Review and Training Grants (ART). The grant funds will be available only to the 57 SAs that administer the Child Nutrition Programs for the purpose of identifying, reviewing, and training local educational agencies that have demonstrated a high level of, or a high risk for, administrative error. FNS will make the funds available on a competitive but streamlined basis.

The FY 2009 ART grant award process involves two types of grant awards:

Method I, Administrative Reviews: funding specifically to conduct additional administrative reviews required under Section 22 of the NSLA; and

Method II, Training and Oversight: funding for special projects via a Concept Paper.

SAs may apply for either or both methods. If applying for both, separate applications must be submitted for each.

This RFA is for the Training and Oversight Grant only. States interested in applying for the Method II Grant must submit an application/concept paper by no later than March 19, 2009. FNS will evaluate the concept papers in accordance with the criteria outlined herein. Applications with the highest scores will be selected for award, however, if selected additional project information and detail will be required to demonstrate how the project will be implemented as described in the concept paper.

The actual number of awards will depend on the quality of the concept papers and the availability of funds. Applications/concept papers selected for award will be announced

by April 22, 2009 and funds will be made available via a grant award document by July 30, 2009. SAs' 5-7 page concept paper must address one or more of these areas.

Three focus areas have been established for the ART Grants this year; they are:

- Training of SFA administrative personnel to include training in application, certification, verification, meal counting and meal claiming procedures. Training may include internet-based training sessions.
- Technology improvements which demonstrate an ability to address administrative errors through the use of targeted monitoring and increased training in error-prone SFAs. States choosing this option must clearly demonstrate how the proposed technology can be used to implement State-level activities; specifically review and training activities associated with error prone SFAs. For example, proposals may include data analysis tools to monitor error-prone school districts, and training methods utilizing internet technology. Proposals for technology improvements addressing other aspects of State-level program management, or local-level functions will not be considered.
- Oversight and training activities focused on the nutritional quality of the meals served as discussed in the School Meal Initiative.

The purpose of this grant funding is to decrease administrative errors in those SFAs and schools identified by SAs as having problems or where problems are likely to arise. Funds authorized cannot be used to replace or augment funding allocated for existing review requirements. In addition, pursuant to Section 7(g) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, funds authorized cannot be used to replace funding allocated for training in administrative practices (including training in application, certification, verification, meal counting, and meal claiming procedures) which is required to occur at a minimum of once a year.

DATES

Applications must be received **on or before 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, March 19, 2009. Applications/Concept papers received after this date and time will not be considered.**

I. BACKGROUND

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265) amended section 22 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, and section 7 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, to establish a requirement that SAs conduct additional administrative reviews of selected local education agencies and training of selected local education agencies.

Purpose

The purpose of these grants is to improve program integrity and administrative accuracy by decreasing administrative errors in those local educational agencies identified by States as having problems or where problems are likely to arise.

Authority

Public Law 108-265 authorizes funding for ART Fund Grants. To be eligible, SAs must identify SFAs or schools that are experiencing or are likely to experience administrative errors.

II. WHO MAY APPLY?

Eligible applicants include all SAs that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). In this instance, the term SA means (a) the State educational agency; and (b) any other agency of the State which has been designated by the Governor or other appropriate executive or legislative authority of the State and approved by the Department of Agriculture to administer the Program in schools. In instances where there are two agencies within a State, such as in the case where the public and private agencies are different, separate applications are acceptable. However, in all instances, in order to be considered, an application/concept paper should be submitted by the SA(s) in response to this solicitation.

III. AVAILABLE GRANT FUNDS AND DEADLINES

A total of approximately \$16 million is available for ART grants in FY 2009. Available funds will be awarded to SAs in the form of grants; however, the submission of a request for funds does not guarantee funding.

The award period for the ART Grants received during FY 2009 will extend through September 30, 2011. All grant funds must be obligated and all program activities under the grant (other than activities relating to the close out of the grant) must be completed by September 30, 2011. The close out of the grant must occur 90 days later, by December 31, 2011, and all obligations incurred under the grant must be liquidated by this date. Any funds that are not liquidated by December 31, 2011 must be returned to FNS. The final reports are due to FNS no later than December 31, 2011. Please see section VII for additional reporting requirements.

IV. CONCEPT PAPER APPLICATION FORMAT

State agencies should submit a narrative concept paper not to exceed seven pages that provides the following information:

- Name, address, and phone number of the appropriate State agency contact person;

- A description of the problem that the proposed project addresses and how the expected results of the project can be used to improve program services at either the regional or national level;
- Potential contribution of the project to ensure the integrity of the NSLP;
- Project goals and objectives;
- Essential features of the project design including a description of how the project will be accomplished and the goals will be achieved, including the main focus area; and
- A description of what oversight will be provided to ensure timely completion of the grant proposal.

Concept papers should meet the following formatting guidelines:

- **seven page maximum length,**
- 8 ½" by 11" paper,
- single-spaced text,
- at least 1" margins on top, bottom, and sides,
- 12 point Times New Roman font size,
- numbered pages,
- printing on one side of page only,
- no color paper, and
- no CD-ROMs.

V. HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

1. Mail: Applicants may receive the RFA package by downloading the application from the FNS website, by downloading the application from the www.grants.gov website or by contacting FNS and requesting a hard copy be sent by mail.

Applications submitted via mail should be addressed to Debby Shore, Grant Officer, Grants Management Division, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 738, Alexandria, Virginia 22302 no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on March 19, 2009. Applications received after this date and time or submitted via facsimile or e-mail will not be considered for funding.

2. Electronic Submission through Grants.gov. Applicants may access and apply electronically through www.grants.gov. To submit the application electronically via the www.grants.gov website, there are a number of steps in the registration process that will be required before the application may be submitted electronically. It is very important that users of the grants.gov system familiarize themselves with the requirements for system use. Please be aware that in order to use the grants.gov system, the user will need to register online and obtain both a Data Universal Number (DUNS) and a Contract Registry Number. Applicants that apply through www.grants.gov will receive a

confirmation notice that the application has been accepted by the system. Applicants must then send an email to notify the FNS Grant Officer that the proposal has been submitted through the www.grants.gov portal and that you have received a confirmation notice from www.grants.gov that the application has been accepted by the system.

The application must be successfully submitted to www.grants.gov and the FNS Grant Officer must receive notification of electronic submission no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on March 19, 2009. **When using the grants.gov portal to apply, we strongly recommend that you submit the online application at least two weeks before the application deadline in case there are problems with the website.** Facsimiles and email applications will not be accepted.

All questions regarding the application and notifications to the regarding electronic submission should be referred to the FNS Grant Officer, Debby Shore via email at deborah.shore@fns.usda.gov or by telephone at (703) 305-2184.

VI. WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN APPLICATION

Applications must include an SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, including a Data Universal Number (DUNS) (a DUNS number can be obtained from the Dun and Bradstreet Group), a Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA number 10.579), an application cover page which identifies the applicant information and the grant by title, a Standard Form 424(A) Budget Summary, and all required assurances. In addition, the application package should include a concept paper as described in Section IV. Information provided to address the evaluation criteria must be sufficiently detailed in the concept paper. In addition to the required Application for Federal Assistance forms, your proposal must address the following information and must be organized as follows:

Applicants chosen for award will be required to submit additional detailed information to include a detailed budget summary.

- 1. Application Cover Page:** The Application Cover Page should include the grant title and the applicant's contact information.
- 2. Budget:** Completion of the SF-424(B), Budget Summary. For application purposes, the budget summary may reflect the total grant award amount being requested and does not need to provide line-item detail or narrative.

Applicants selected for award will be required to provide additional detailed information including a more detailed budget summary. This detailed budget summary must include the amount of funds projected to be used for the different activities planned. Upon award, FNS will carefully consider how funds will be used since the law requires that funds be distributed to SAs to assist them in reviewing the administrative practices and providing training to local educational agencies. **Approved funds must be**

obligated and expended in accordance with the amounts indicated on the approved budget. Changes to approved activities or budgets require prior approval by FNS. However, up to ten percent of the funds budgeted by the SA can be shifted from one cost category to another without prior FNS approval or FNS revision.

3. Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (ICRA): Applicants claiming indirect costs **must** provide a copy of an approved ICRA for all indirect costs and a written explanation of how the indirect costs were applied to the budget. If indirect costs are not being claimed, please indicate so.

VII. EVALUATION INFORMATION

Panel Review

The concept paper is the first step of this application process and provides FNS with an opportunity to consider the "proposed concept" and does not guarantee funding. All applications that meet the deadline for submission will be screened for completeness and conformity to the requirements of this solicitation. This initial screening will include ensuring that the concept paper addresses one of the three designated focus areas.

Applications that do not pass this initial screen **will not be evaluated further.** After initial screening, FNS will convene a panel of FNS staff to consider the merit of each grant application/concept paper. The panel will evaluate each grant application according to how well it addresses each application component. The panel will assign each application a score using the evaluation criteria and weights specified below.

1. Project Design and Implementation **30 points**

The significance of the problem to be addressed is demonstrated and the project design and implementation timeline follow directly from the project goals.

2. Impact on Program Integrity **30 points**

The project clearly supports identifying and implementing improvement in program integrity including meal counting, claiming, and certification.

3. Budget Plan **20 points**

The total funding amount requested seems proportionate to the scope of the project.

4. Sustainability and Transferability **20 points**

Feasibility of incorporating project purposes, activities, or results into the ongoing program of the agency at the end of Federal funding.

Transferability of the project and its results for adaptation and implementation by other SAs.

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by score, starting with the highest score. Applications/concept papers with the highest scores will be chosen to receive funding. The concept paper is the basis for the final award. In addition, FNS reserves the option to select out of ranking or to select an ITO in order to achieve a diversity and regional representation.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Administrative Requirements:

The grant program will be awarded and administered in accordance with applicable Federal and program regulations. These include but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 3015: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements implementing OMB directives (OMB Circular A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments);

7 CFR Part 3016: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments;

7 CFR Part 3017: Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);

7 CFR Part 3021: Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance);

7 CFR Part 3018: Restrictions on Lobbying; and

7 CFR Part 3052: (OMB Circular A-133) Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

Funding:

- Funds authorized cannot be used for reviews that are currently carried out using State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds.
- Funds cannot be used for local level expenses associated with administrative reviews or training activities.
- Funds must be expended in accordance with activities outlined in the template.
- Funding for approved proposals will be provided through the Letter of Credit process in the same manner as other funds. However, SAs will be required to separately track and report these funds via a SF-269(A) Financial Status Report.

Assurances:

- FNS will obtain assurance that applicants are neither suspended nor debarred prior to making an award. If chosen, the applicant must also agree to make a good faith effort, on a continuing basis, to (A) maintain a drug-free workplace (including taking specific actions described at 7 CFR Sec. 3021.200 through 3021.230); and (B) identify all workplace locations where work under Federal award will be performed (7 CFR Sec. 3021.200). Since Federal entities will no longer collect a paper certification, this may include the following:
 - a) Notifying all sub-grantees and contractors of the Drug Free Workplace rules,
 - b) Making conforming changes to your internal procedures, directives, training materials, etc., and
 - c) Incorporating the new rules into your sub-grantee monitoring practices.
- Applicants chosen for award will also be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspensions and debarment rules found at 7 CFR Sec. 3017.300 by doing any **one** of the following:
 - a) Checking the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) found at www.epls.gov
 - b) Collecting a certification that the entity is neither excluded nor disqualified. Since a Federal certification form is no longer available, the grantee or sub-grantee electing this method must devise its own.
 - c) Including a clause to this effect in the sub-grant agreement and in any procurement contract expected to equal or exceed \$25,000 awarded by the grantee or a sub-grantee under its grant or sub-grant.

Reporting:

- All SAs receiving FY 2009 Administrative Review and Training Fund Grants are required to submit the following reports in accordance with the deadlines noted:
 - a) Semiannual Financial Reports. FNS is transitioning to electronic submission of SF-269 financial data. At some point during fiscal year 2009, FNS will no longer accept paper SF-269A submissions from the grantee. Grantees will be required to electronically enter the semiannual as well as the final financial status report (SF-269A) into the Food Programs Reporting System (FPRS). This report must be certified by the grantee's chief fiscal officer or an officer of comparable rank. If you are selected for a grant, we will provide further instructions on electronically entering your data into FPRS. Further instruction regarding the reporting format and dates will be provided to those receiving awards.
 - b) Semiannual Progress Reports. The Semiannual Progress Reports must include **(in narrative form)**: 1) a brief description of the planned review activities for the report period; 2) accomplishments for each activity and completion dates; 3) a description of any deviations from the approved plan—this summary

should discuss difficulties encountered and solutions developed; and 4) any other unique aspects that would be useful to share including the number and names of local educational agencies that were reviewed using the grant funds. An **original and one copy** of the Progress Report must be submitted semiannually. Submission dates will be provided to those receiving awards.

IX. CHECKLIST FOR THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The application package must include:

_____The Application for Funding

- Cover Letter – A cover letter should be the first page of the application
- Proposal that responds to the criteria and includes all of the proposal components discussed herein;
- Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- Standard Form 424(A), Budget Information – Non Construction Programs;
- Standard Form 424(B), Assurances – Non Construction Programs;
- Anti-Lobbying Restrictions require that an applicant submit the required certification with each new submission of an application for funding.

_____The Correct Number of Copies

- An original bearing the original signature of the authorized representative.
- Two copies of the original application.

_____The Correct Format

- The original must be ready for copying, i.e., single-sided, unstapled, unbound, single spaced and on 8 ½ by 11 white paper;
- Font size must be 12 point;
- Margins must be at least one inch;
- Original and copies must be on white paper;

The application and attachments cannot include videotapes, brochures, binders, folders, or sleeves.